



**TRANSPORTATION
FOR A LIVABLE CITY**

May 26th 2005

TO: Joint Policy Committee
Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter
101 Eighth Street, P.O. Box 2050
Oakland, CA 94607-4756

RE: TLC supports MTC's Regional TOD Policy if density thresholds are increased

Dear Joint Policy Committee Members:

Transportation for a Livable City (TLC) is a **community-based policy and advocacy organization** dedicated to improving San Franciscans' quality of life by promoting greater transportation choices, safer and better-designed streets, reduced auto traffic, and the creation of more affordable housing along transit corridors.

TLC is writing to express our **conditional support for MTC's Regional Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Policy**. The Regional TOD policy will help the Bay Area address its two major problems of building more affordable housing without creating more sprawl and using scarce transportation funding wisely:

- **Building more affordable housing without creating more sprawl.** Requiring reasonably dense housing around new transit stations (including some dedicated affordable housing) can help create vibrant communities that accommodate future growth without sprawling onto the Bay Area's remaining open space and working farms. San Francisco is already building its regional fair share of affordable housing near transit, and this policy will encourage all Bay Area communities to do so as well.
- **Using scarce transportation dollars wisely.** Creating transit villages around new stations ensures scarce regional transit dollars will generate a good return on investment by increasing transit ridership and reducing auto congestion. Because San Francisco is currently shortchanged by regional transportation funding formulas (allocations are based on residential population instead of daytime population), we are especially concerned that no additional transportation dollars be wasted on costly transit investments which generate low ridership due to lack of transit-supportive land use policies (e.g. commuter rail stations surrounded by low-density subdivisions, strip malls, and big-box retail stores with massive parking lots).

But while TLC supports the intent of the MTC's Regional TOD Policy, **we believe the current housing and jobs threshold are too low and will not achieve the professed goal of achieving the MTC's Smart Growth Vision of accommodating a significant portion of new growth within already urbanized areas and along existing and new transit corridors.**

As you know, the MTC's "Smart Growth Vision" sets out the goal of accommodating half of the Bay Area's future growth. About a quarter of this growth (23%) can be



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accommodated around existing transit. The remaining growth (26%) needs to be accommodated around future transit extensions (Resolution 3434 projects). But under the currently proposed Regional TOD policy, future transit extensions will only accommodate 11% of the region's future growth. That leaves 16% of the region's future growth still unaccounted for!

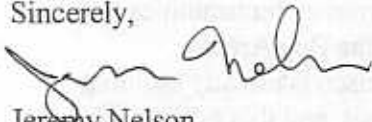
In order to bring the region closer to the Smart Growth Vision and to capture this unaccounted growth, the "combined threshold" in the proposed Regional TOD Policy would need to be more than doubled. For this reason, **TLC urges you to increase the "combined threshold" by at least 50%**

In addition, **TLC urges you to increase the "minimum housing unit threshold" to 70% to 80% of the "total density threshold"** (instead of the currently proposed 40%) in order to increase transit ridership and to create the affordable housing the Bay Area desperately needs.

TLC is eager to support an *effective* and *robust* policy linking transportation funds to smart growth land use policies, but we do not believe in the currently proposed Regional TOD Policy will be effective in achieving the Smart Growth Vision.

To create more affordable housing, reign in sprawl, and ensure ridership for costly transit expansion, we urge you to strengthen the policy to require more of the Bay Area's future growth to occur around future station areas, and to require more housing near transit stations as well.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Nelson
Policy Director, Transportation for a Livable City

Cc:

Tom Radulovich, Executive Director, Transportation for a Livable City
Stuart Cohen, Executive Director, Transportation and Land Use Coalition
Emily Drennen, Executive Director, Walk SF
Leah Shahum, Executive Director, San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
Tom Steinbach, Executive Director, Greenbelt Alliance
Andrew Sullivan, Executive Director, Rescue Muni
Dianne Spaulding, Executive Director, Non-Profit Housing Assn of Northern California
Kate White, Executive Director, Housing Action Coalition